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Counter monuments

While I do not believe I have encountered many counter monuments in person, their impact on the world is large. Classic monuments, such as the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the Jefferson Memorial, are large, and nearly impossible to ignore structures. These structures are also very obvious in their purpose. In fact, the title of each memorial states exactly what a person would see if they were able to see these monuments in person. There is no hidden message in the Washington Monument; it is simply a structure that honors George Washington. Similarly, it is hard to analyze the Lincoln Memorial in a way that ignores the fact that the entire structure is a testament to his work. The examples of counter monuments that were given in the reading seemed to all leave room for interpretation. For example, the structure, design, and location of the Vietnam Memorial does not point to its purpose.

Counter monuments aren’t typically made out of the same type of material as classic monuments. The Lincoln, the Washington, and the Jefferson are all giant white stone structures. It could be interesting to create a counter monument that completely contrasts these structures.

Acknowledging that this project is hypothetical, I do wonder how much resistance a counter monument would face if it were to be put on the national mall. The Mall is such an iconic place, and putting structures that changed the meaning of the other monuments, even temporarily, would be very hard to do.